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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 509**

TO: House Appropriations Committee  
FROM: Maryland Department of Labor  
DATE: 3/31/2026  
BILL: SB 509 - Higher Education - Workforce Pell Grant Program -  
Implementation

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**MD LABOR POSITION: FAVORABLE**

Senate Bill 509 seeks to implement the federal Workforce Pell Grant Program in Maryland, a framework established by the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025. The federal legislation authorizes federal Pell Grants for students enrolled in high-quality "short-term programs" of between 8 and 15 weeks or 150-599 hours of instruction, that meet high outcomes standards: 70% completion rate and 70% job placement rate. By aligning these programs with high-skill, high-wage, or in-demand industry sectors as defined by states, the federal act aims to bridge the gap between traditional higher education and immediate workforce needs through stackable, portable credentials.

SB509 is intended to solidify Maryland's commitment to upholding several positive provisions of draft federal regulations regarding implementation of Workforce Pell Grants, particularly those regarding Registered Apprenticeship. Mirroring draft federal rule language, SB509 articulates provisions that allow programs providing related instruction for Registered Apprenticeships to automatically be considered eligible against several key Workforce Pell eligibility criteria. These provisions are positive, allowing more students to access life-changing Registered Apprenticeships and incentivizing more institutions, including community colleges, to align their offerings to serve as related instruction in Registered Apprenticeships.

The Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) and the Department strongly support the intent of SB509 in this regard and support its amendments. GWDB, as the state workforce development board, is the only federally-mandated [www.labor.maryland.gov](http://www.labor.maryland.gov)



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entity involved in the development of state-level eligibility criteria and involved in consulting with the Governor on all program approvals. In Maryland, the GWDB is leading this work in close partnership with MHEC, MD Labor, and other state agencies and local stakeholders. The amendments accurately reflect these agency roles and responsibilities.

The Department respectfully requests that the Committee consider this information during its deliberations on SB509.

For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti at **[Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov)**

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